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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT NO.

TOPIC Herseburg Airfield

EVALUATION see below

PLACE OBTAINED

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DATE OF CONTENT 10 September to 10 October 1952

25X DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED 18 November 1952

25X REFERENCES

PAGES 3

ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

1 - sketch on ditto

REMARKS

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1. At 11:20 a.m. on 2 October 1952, a MiG-15 was observed taking off from Herseburg airfield. The overcast was at an altitude of about 1,000 meters, and visibility was about 6 km. Eighteen swept-back jet fighters were parked at the landing field; eight of these which were parked at the eastern end of the runway definitely were MiG-15s. All the planes were fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks. From 5 to 6 p.m. on 7 October, individual swept-back jet fighters continuously circled over the field. Between 8 and 11 p.m., groups of two swept-back jet fighters took off heading west. After about 30 minutes, they landed individually. When one group of two planes had landed and left the runway the next group of two planes would take off. At 5 p.m., eight MiG-15s fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks took off from the eastern end of the runway as previously observed. Eleven swept-back jet fighters without auxiliary fuel tanks were parked on the north-south taxiway. There was no day flying at the field on 10 October. Between 8:30 p.m. and midnight, the noise of flying jet fighters from his apartment. Between 5 and 5:30 p.m., 23 swept-back jet fighters were observed at the field. Eight swept-back jet fighters without fuel tanks were seen at the eastern end of the runway. Fifteen planes were parked along the taxiway. (1)

2. About 10 p.m. on days on which no flying was conducted, the starting of jet engines from the direction of the parking site for the alert unit. The howling of a jet engine was heard for a short time, the engine then continued to run for about 2 minutes until the starting of another jet engine was heard. This procedure was repeated several times. After about 10 minutes, there was again complete quiet at the field. At 3 p.m. on 27 September and at 7 a.m. on 28 September, only seven planes were seen in the aircraft dispersal area. Eight and six planes were seen parked there on 25 and 26 September respectively. From 4:55 to 5 a.m. on 10 September, a siren was sounded at the airfield. About seven minutes later the noise of running jet engines was heard from the direction of the parking area for the alert planes. (2)

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3. When night flying was conducted at the field, a searchlight which was located outside the installation, showed the direction to landing aircraft. Another searchlight, posted at the field illuminated the runway. A rotating searchlight, which rotated 14 times in succession and then switched out its light for a short pause was also seen. Two other large searchlights were posted at the southern edge of the field near the fuel dump. On 24 and 25 September, these searchlights left the installation for practices in the vicinity of the field. The searchlights tried to get in their beams two jet planes which were flying at an altitude of about 3,000 meters between 10 and 10:30 p.m. If the searchlights had one of the planes in their beams, they switched off their light and then started the operation again. The flying planes did not appear to be disturbed by the searchlights and did not try to get out of their beams. As no aircraft had taken off from Herseburg airfield during the reported time, []

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4. The Dumbo type radar set moved from the southwestern corner of the field 150 meters to the north. On 20 September, a radar set of undetermined type was set up on the south side of the installation. (3)
5. In late September, a building on the approach road to the airfield was confiscated and then surrounded by a fence. Subsequently, Russians who wore civilian clothes occupied this building.

6. Between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. on 2 October, formation flying was practiced at the field. Wedge and line abreast formations were seen. Three or four formations of five planes crossed the field and Herseburg at an altitude of about 100 meters. There was a closed cloud ceiling, and visibility was 4 km. From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 3 October, 10 to 12 take-offs for local flights were observed. The overcast was at about 800 meters and visibility 4 km. At 9:10 a.m. on 4 October, 4 MiG-15s took off and then headed northeast. The planes were not observed landing again on this day. At 1:31 p.m., a MiG-15 [] landed. [] this plane had taken off at the field on 4 October. From 3:46 to 4:45 p.m. on 5 October, two MiG-15s [] made 55-minute flights. They left the field and returned only for landing. Visibility was poor, and there was continuous rain. The ceiling was at about 600 meters. On the two preceding Sundays, a group of two MiG-15s each had taken off in the same way. From noon to 3 p.m. on 6 October, there was continuous flying. There was a 8/10 overcast at an altitude of 600 meters. The weather was rainy, visibility 3 km.

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7. From 12:20 to 1:04 p.m. on 7 October, 5 planes practiced formation flying. From 5:06 to about 11 p.m. formation flying in groups of two was conducted. The weather was cloudy, and visibility good. Through field glasses, [] 31 MiG-15s parked at the field. Another 3 or 4 MiG-15s were probably also available. A single-engine plane was also seen. From 10:50 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. flying by individual planes was practiced. The weather was rainy and the cloud base was at an altitude of about 500 meters. From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 9 October, flying was conducted as on 2 October. The weather was clear. Two formations of 5 planes each were flying at an interval of about 200 meters. A MiG-15 [] was frequently the leading plane of the formations.
8. In early October, the training of pilots at the field had reached a high level. Individual take-offs which were practiced occasionally indicated that some of the pilots still had to be familiarized with MiG-15 aircraft. However, the bulk of the pilots flew this type very efficiently. In early October, formation flying was practiced. Within the framework of this formation flying, fire attack tactics were particularly stressed. Dives were seldom observed; the same applies to instrument flying conducted by type-29 planes. Even when cloud ceilings had a thickness of

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about 1,000 meters, formations were seen coming through the ceiling in good order. The night flying observed also showed efficient training. Safety measures appeared to be very strict. Not a single accident was observed since night flying was started at the field. (4)

- 25X1 9. Two lamps lighted up on landing gears of MiG-15s landing at night. It appeared [] that these lamps were fitted on the shock-absorbing struts near the wings. It could not be determined when these lights were switched on. The extending of the landing gear took about 10 seconds. All the MiG-15s observed at the field were fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks. The planes would taxi under their own power from the end of the runway to their parking lots. Very seldom was it observed that they towed away by a special tractor. The towing device was fastened at the nose wheel of the MiG-15. However, towing hooks were also fitted at the tails of these planes. The pilots would leave the cabins of MiG-15s through the roof, climb on the wings and then jump on the ground.

- 25X1 10. On 7 October, [] gun barrels at the AAA emplacement at the eastern edge of the field. (5)

11. [] 25X1

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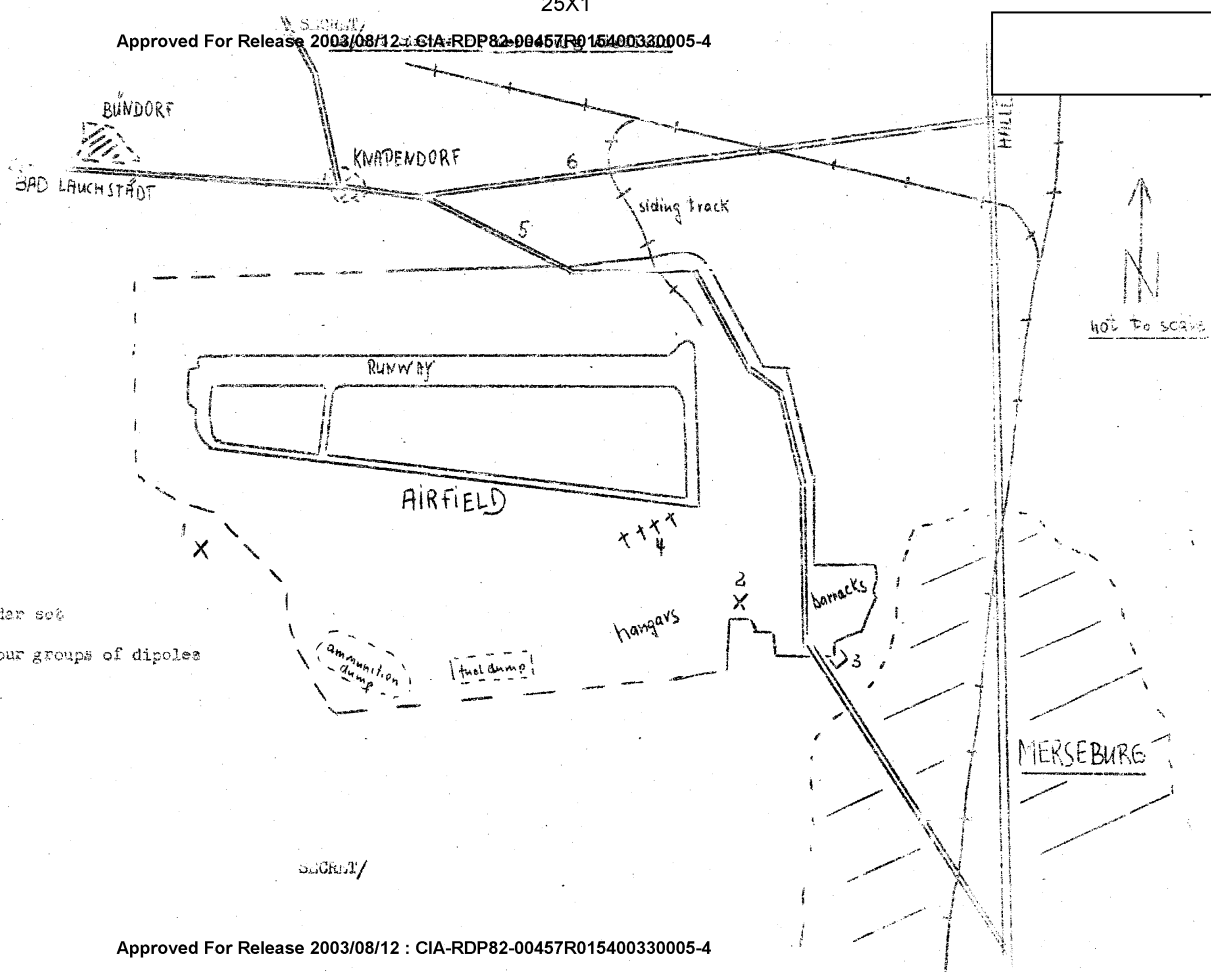
- (1) A fighter regiment equipped with 30 to 35 MiG-15s is stationed at the field.
- (2) The alert flight of the fighter regiment in Merseburg is usually parked at the eastern end of the runway. It was also observed at other fields that the engines of alert planes are warmed up in the mornings and evenings.
- (3) The new radar set is fitted with four groups of dipoles. Such a set was observed in Plauen in April 1952. [] For location of the two radar sets at Merseburg airfield, see Annex.
- (4) Reports have also been received from other fields that small formations of MiG-15s pierced closed cloud covers. It is believed that each fighter regiment includes a number of well trained pilots, who are completely familiar with blind flying techniques. Further information is required in order to be able to assay accurately the efficiency reached in blind flying.
- (5) According to available information, two AAA batteries of 6 x 37-mm guns each are stationed at the field.

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